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REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE SITUATION IN SIERRA LEONE

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to a number of requests from members of the Security Council. It covers the period since my good offices were formally requested by the Government of Sierra Leone in November 1994.

2. The conflict in Sierra Leone began in March 1991, when the forces of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) launched attacks to overthrow the Government of the All People's Congress (APC) headed by former President Joseph S. Momoh. The conflict has so far caused the deaths of thousands of civilians, while many thousands more are internally displaced or are refugees in Guinea and Liberia.

3. On 29 April 1992, the Government of President Momoh was overthrown by a military coup and the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC) was established. Captain Valentine E. M. Strasser became the Chairman of NPRC and Head of State. After the coup, RUF made additional demands and continued its conflict with the new Government.

4. Towards the end of 1993, NPRC regained control of areas held by RUF in the southern and eastern parts of the country and subsequently announced a unilateral cease-fire in December 1993. Nevertheless, attacks on towns, villages and major highways escalated to unprecedented levels and spread throughout the country.

5. In a letter addressed to me on 24 November 1994, Chairman Strasser formally requested my good offices to bring the Government and RUF to negotiations, with the United Nations serving as an intermediary in that process. I dispatched a member of the Department of Political Affairs, Mr. Felix Mosha, to Sierra Leone to explore the possibilities of dialogue between the Government and RUF. He held a series of discussions from 15 to 22 December 1994 with Government officials, prominent citizens, religious leaders, resident diplomats and representatives of all United Nations bodies and agencies in Sierra Leone. He was not able, however, to establish contact with RUF in order to assess its

attitude towards negotiations. In a letter to me dated 28 December 1994, Chairman Strasser expressed his appreciation and full support for the mission and requested that I continue my efforts.

6. The findings of the exploratory mission convinced me of the need to establish a more permanent presence in Freetown. I therefore appointed Mr. Berhanu Dinka (Ethiopia) as my Special Envoy for Sierra Leone and communicated this to the President of the Security Council on 7 February 1995 (S/1995/120).

II. POLITICAL SITUATION

7. During the last three years, while taking military measures against RUF, the Government has followed a two-track political approach: a negotiated settlement with RUF and democratization of the political process, including transition to an elected civilian Government within a fixed time-frame. These two political approaches are intended to reinforce each other.

A. The pursuit of negotiations

8. Prior to requesting my good offices, the Government had dispatched a delegation of prominent Sierra Leoneans to the border with Liberia to establish contact with RUF and pave the way for peace talks. The delegation met with the representatives of RUF on the Mano river bridge and held meetings with them on 24 November and 4 and 7 December 1994. Since then, there have been no follow-up meetings and each side has blamed the other for the non-resumption of talks. RUF accused the Government of sabotaging the process by issuing derogatory statements while the talks were being held. The Government alleged that the talks were discontinued because RUF took hostage three members of the Government delegation and continues to hold them.

9. My Special Envoy has spared no effort to establish contact with RUF. He has closely collaborated with the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the Commonwealth Secretariat and other organizations supporting negotiations in Sierra Leone. Along with the OAU and Commonwealth delegations, he issued a tripartite statement in Freetown in February 1995, calling on RUF to meet with them. He has since kept in constant communication with officials of these two organizations.

10. In his attempts to establish contact with RUF leadership, my Special Envoy has sought and received assistance from official bodies, private individuals and non-governmental organizations in Sierra Leone and throughout the subregion. This has enabled him to communicate with Mr. Foday Sankoh, the leader of RUF, and some of its senior members. In May 1995, Mr. Sankoh invited my Special Envoy to visit him at his base but later changed his mind. In a similar vein, at the beginning of September 1995, he invited, through the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Freetown, a number of prominent Sierra Leoneans to meet him. The Government agreed to allow those invited to proceed to the meeting. On 18 September, ICRC informed RUF of the Government's

agreement and requested RUF to fix the date and venue. No response has yet been received.

11. My Special Envoy is still continuing his efforts through various channels to meet face-to-face with the RUF leader. In addition to these efforts, he has been assisting and encouraging the Government in its democratization process.

B. Democratization

12. On 26 November 1993, Chairman Strasser issued a declaration setting out a programme of transition to democratic constitutional rule. According to the schedule, registration of voters was to have been completed from March to June 1994 and presidential elections were to have taken place in November 1995. However, the continued conflict and limited State resources have delayed the implementation of the transition programme by one year.

13. On 27 April 1995, on the occasion of the thirty-fourth anniversary of independence, Chairman Strasser reaffirmed the commitment of NPRC to the transition programme, pledging that everything possible would be done to complete its implementation by January 1996, when a democratically elected President would be sworn in. Several important steps have followed that pronouncement.

14. The Interim National Electoral Commission (INEC), which was established by Decree No. 1, 1994, has intensified its activity under the chairmanship of Mr. James O. C. Jonah. Its sister organization, the National Commission for Democracy (NCD), established by Decree No. 15, 1994, promotes civic and voter education throughout the country.

15. At the request of the Government, the United Nations Electoral Assistance Division conducted a needs assessment mission from 22 November to 2 December 1994, in close collaboration with the National Electoral Commission, to identify the technical requirements for organizing the electoral process, including voter registration, polling, civic education, training of electoral officers, legal issues and the electoral timetable.

16. On 20 June 1995, the Government issued Decree No. 7, 1995, lifting the ban on political activities, which it had imposed when it came to power, and empowered INEC to register political parties. Fifteen political parties have so far been issued with final certificates of registration and have begun campaigning (see annex I).

17. In order to build broad-based support for the electoral process, a National Consultative Conference on Elections was held in Freetown from 15 to 17 August 1995 with the participation of all the political parties, representatives of the Government and 78 different organizations representing a wide spectrum of civil society. The Conference adopted a system of elections based on proportional representation, a code of conduct for political parties and rules to govern campaign financing. The Conference overwhelmingly agreed to hold elections by the end of February 1996. The date has since been set for

26 February 1996. The vigorous debate and the consensus that emerged indicate wide support for the democratic process.

18. As a result of these decisions, INEC is ready to begin voter registration and to finalize preparations for the elections. However, there are serious financial constraints that endanger this process: the total budgetary requirement is US$ 10,730,219, but only US$ 1,125,005 in cash and kind has so far been raised from external sources (see annex II). Unless additional financial support is made available, the electoral timetable will not be met.

19. Postponement of the elections could result in escalating violence and halt altogether the process of democratization. There are some elements within Sierra Leone that seek to derail the electoral process, as was attested by the attempted coup of 2 October 1995.

20. Various efforts have been made to raise resources. At a briefing of donor countries on the electoral and political situation in Sierra Leone on 2 November 1995, the response was very positive. I am convening a donors' conference on electoral assistance to Sierra Leone in New York on 30 November and I urge Member States to respond generously.

21. I have instructed my Special Envoy to follow closely all aspects of the democratization process. I have also instructed him to encourage the Government and leaders of the political parties to safeguard the integrity of the process, ensuring that the elections are free and fair and that their outcome is not contested.

III. SECURITY SITUATION

22. When NPRC took power, the Republic of Sierra Leone Military Forces numbered 3,000. A massive recruitment drive increased their total strength to around 14,000. After the December 1994 offensive by RUF, however, it became clear that the forces were inadequate to confront the challenges they faced. In addition, some soldiers have been implicated in illegal activities.

23. Given the links between the conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone, certain regional and other countries have taken the decision to provide military assistance to Sierra Leone. In addition, NPRC has been using non-Sierra Leonean advisers to improve the fighting skills of its troops, instil discipline and upgrade command and control.

24. The situation on the ground has not changed dramatically. Foreign and Sierra Leonean nationals, including seven nuns, were taken hostage in different parts of the country in early 1995 and subsequently released on 21 March 1995. In addition, RUF began moving closer to Freetown and captured several villages in Kono District, an area rich in diamonds and therefore of great economic importance.

25. Recently, morale and discipline within the Republic of Sierra Leone Military Forces appear to have improved. The diamond fields of Kono and a number of villages were retaken by Government forces in July and August 1995.

The frequency of ambushes on the highways has decreased in the last few weeks and, if the present trend continues, the delivery of relief assistance to the countryside, as well as registration and voting, will be facilitated.

26. The majority of the combatants on both sides are young men with no employable skills other than soldiering. The Government has expressed its desire to demobilize part of its army. This is imperative, but it is also vital to reintegrate the demobilized soldiers into society as productive citizens. Sierra Leone lacks the resources to accomplish this task and the international community needs to assist the processes of demobilization and reintegration. While this programme will initially cover only members of the Republic of Sierra Leone Military Forces and those RUF combatants who are already in the hands of the Government, it must be designed to cover those still in the field as soon as a cease-fire and peace agreement are in place.

27. The Republic of Sierra Leone Military Forces held a seminar on 16 and 17 November 1995 with civilians and representatives of political parties to discuss the differences of perception and mutual suspicion between the military and the civilian population. It hopes that this seminar will create a harmonious environment in preparation for the forthcoming transition to civilian rule.

IV. THE ECONOMIC SITUATION

The socio-economic costs of the war

28. Much of the fighting has taken place in the mineral-rich areas in the south and east and the agriculturally viable regions where cocoa, coffee and other cash crops are grown. As a result, production of gold and diamonds dropped from 43,000 tons in 1991 to 38,000 tons in 1994. This was reflected in a $30 million decline in exports. Income from the production of cash crops has declined from $21 million in 1990 to $7.6 million in 1993, a fall of 64 per cent. At the same time, government expenditures have risen as a result of the war; it is estimated that some 75 per cent of total revenue is now spent on the war effort.

29. Infrastructure damage has been enormous, with academic institutions, government offices, banks, health centres, schools and hospitals in a state of severe disrepair. Roads, bridges and construction equipment have been destroyed, while the Government, the churches, NGOs and mining companies have closed or scaled down operations and laid off thousands of workers as part of the austerity measures.

30. The Government has been credited with stabilizing the economy. However, the formal economy accounts for only 25 to 30 per cent of the country's total economic activities. As economic opportunities in the formal sector decline, people have little choice but to participate more fully in the informal economy, including resorting to acts of banditry.

31. Much of the war is being fought in the rural areas, particularly in the south and east, affecting semi-subsistence farmers who make up the bulk of the rural population. Farms have been destroyed, food stores burnt, domestic

animals stolen or killed and agricultural tools looted. Attacks have consistently taken place during the dry season, preventing farmers from harvesting their crops. As a result, 248,800 tons of cereals were imported in 1992, an 80 per cent increase over the previous year. Continued food shortages are likely to perpetuate the war.

V. HUMANITARIAN

32. The humanitarian situation in Sierra Leone remains critical. Nearly 2 million people have been internally displaced, the majority flocking to major towns, including Bo, Kenema and Makeni. This represents close to 50 per cent of the country's estimated population of 4,477,000. Only about 1.1 million persons from this group receive assistance with any degree of regularity, owing to security constraints. Highways linking Freetown to key population centres have been usable only sporadically for much of this year and the impact on civilian populations has been severe. In the eastern and south-eastern areas of the country, which have been totally inaccessible for more than eight months, it is feared that malnutrition will soon reach life-threatening levels. Beginning in September 1995, however, there has been a relative improvement in access, allowing humanitarian organizations to deliver relief without armed escorts. Areas in the eastern portion of the country, however, remain inaccessible.

33. The gap between the resources made available by the international community for humanitarian assistance and the unmet needs of the affected population continues to be great. In March 1995, I launched the United Nations inter-agency consolidated appeal for humanitarian assistance to Sierra Leone, covering the period from March to December 1995 and requesting $14.7 million for the emergency activities of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs. Only 41 per cent of the funds requested has been received. This pattern is particularly worrying with respect to the status of WFP food stocks and anticipated needs for the coming year. Resources are required as soon as possible to prevent an even more precarious food aid situation next year.

34. The emergency situation has prevented development organizations from carrying out any sustained activity outside the Freetown area. Programmes have now been reoriented to address the emergency. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs will establish a humanitarian assistance coordination unit in Freetown, staffed by three experienced officers, to support the United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator.

VII. OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

35. While the situation in Sierra Leone is generally characterized by conflict, human suffering and economic decline, there are some positive emerging trends which, if assisted, would contribute to the re-establishment of peace and stability. The ongoing process of democratization, particularly the elections set for 26 February 1996, is a significant element in this development and worthy of the international community's support.

36. The internal conflict that has raged for the last four years has damaged or destroyed much of the vital physical and social infrastructure of the country. In order to consolidate the democratic process and support the incoming elected civilian Government, I urge the international community to demonstrate its solidarity with the people of Sierra Leone, many of whom believe that the world has abandoned them. Some initial steps must be taken now to signal the international community's commitment to assist this democratization process.

37. Given the importance of the issue, I am instructing the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to field a team of experts to prepare, in collaboration with the Government, a coordinated and workable action plan for the demobilization and reintegration of combatants. The team will take into account the experiences gained by the United Nations in El Salvador and Mozambique, as well as the present effort in Liberia, to identify sources of funds so that implementation can begin expeditiously.

38. I have also instructed the Electoral Assistance Division to work closely with other United Nations agencies and programmes, in particular UNDP, to assist INEC in coordinating international observers during the elections and in strengthening national observer groups.

39. The humanitarian situation in Sierra Leone is a cause for concern because of the widening gap between the needs of the war-affected population and the resources available to humanitarian agencies. Unless the international community responds quickly to enhance the humanitarian agencies' capacity to deliver relief assistance in time and in sufficient quantity, the situation may become desperate. In this connection, I should like to commend all United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations operating in Sierra Leone for their response to the emergency situation by reorienting their various programmes.

40. Delivering relief assistance to the needy is not an easy task even at the best of times. It becomes almost impossible when humanitarian convoys are targeted. Members of the Security Council may consider admonishing those responsible for attacking relief convoys and urging them to refrain from such deplorable actions.

41. Despite all efforts to contact it, the RUF leadership has remained elusive and unresponsive to initiatives for a meeting or negotiations. While commending those Governments, non-governmental organizations and individuals that have been supporting the efforts of my Special Envoy, the time has come for the international community to urge RUF to take advantage of my good offices and to initiate a process of negotiation.

42. I intend to retain my Special Envoy in Sierra Leone for the time being. He will continue his efforts to establish a dialogue between RUF and the Government and to support the process of democratization. His efforts will be coordinated with OAU and the Commonwealth.

43. In conclusion, I should like to call upon Member States to provide the fullest possible material and financial support to INEC so that the elections

can be held on schedule. Although there are legitimate security concerns, experience has shown in other places, such as Cambodia and South Africa, that the democratic process should not be held hostage to the intransigence of any particular group.

Annex I

List of registered political parties in Sierra Leone

	Name of political party	Name of leader
1.	People's Progressive Party (PPP)	Edward Bundu-Kamara
2.	National Unity Movement (NUM)	Desmond Luke
3.	People's National Convention (PNC)	Ibrahim Ben Kargbo
4.	United National People's Party (UNPP)	John Karafa-Smart
5.	People's Democratic Party (PDP)	Thaimu Bangura
6.	All People's Congress (APC)	S. A. T. Koroma
7.	National Unity Party (NUP)	A. O. D. George
8.	Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP)	Rev. Paul Dumbar
9.	National Democratic Alliance (NDA)	Foday B. Mansaray
10.	National People's Party (NPP)	Alimamy Yamba Komeh
11.	National Republican Party (NRP)	Sahr Steven Mambu
12.	Democratic Centre Party (DCP)	Abu A. Koroma
13.	Coalition for Progress Party (CPP)	Ms. Jeredine Williams Sarho
14.	National Alliance Democratic Party (NADP)	Mohamed Y. Sillah
15.	Social Democratic Party (SDP)	Andrew Lungay

Annex II

Interim National Electoral Commission

Electoral assistance budget (November 1995-March 1996)

Funding status as at 24 October 1995

Category	Description	Amount	Funded	Promised	Not funded
Coordination	Chief technical adviser	108 000	108 000 a/		
	Legal adviser	60 000	60 000 b/		
	United Nations Volunteers	55 000			55 000
	Electoral coordinator	30 000			30 000
	Admin. support personnel	36 000	36 000 a/		
	Mission costs/duty travel	25 000	25 000 a/		
	Reports sundries	18 000	18 000 a/		
	Subtotal	332 000	247 000		85 000
Voter education	International personnel				
	Media coordinator	60 000	60 000 b/		
	Civic education consultant	120 000	120 000 c/		
	National personnel				
	Civic education consultants	12 000	10 000 a/		2 000
	Publicity supervisors	14 667			14 667
	Publicity officers	175 000			175 000
	Publicity assistants	400 000			400 000
Materials rental	Audiovisual productions	55 556	20 000 d/		35 556
	Theatre productions	100 000	63 000 e/		37 000
	Design/graphic materials	83 333			83 333
	Vehicle rental	100 000			100 000

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Category	Description	Amount	Funded	Promised	Not funded
	Launch/other rental	5 556			5 556
	Mobile radio communications	300 000	50 000 a/		250 000
	Training	50 556			50 556
	Equipment materials	100 687			100 687
	Audiovisual communication vehicles	250 000	250 000 f/		
	Fuel and maintenance	106 500			106 500
	Subtotal	1 933 855	573 000		1 360 855
Voter registration	International personnel				
	Logistics coordinator	60 000	60 000 g/		
	Team leaders	40 000			40 000
	Database expert	17 555	17 555 a/		
	Registration coordinators	7 200	7 200 a/		
	Registrars	500 000			500 000
	Data editors	25 667			25 667
	Revision personnel	250 000			250 000
	Data entry personnel	20 000			20 000
	Logistics assistants	6 000			6 000
Training	Registration officials	100 000		63 000 h/	37 000
Rentals/others	Vehicles for registration	166 667			166 667
	Vehicles for revision	83 333			83 333
Materials	Registration	400 000		100 000 h/ 100 000 i/	300 000
	Computerization	220 250	8 500 e/ 211 750 h/		
	Subtotal	1 896 672	305 005	263 000	1 328 667

Category	Description	Amount	Funded	Promised	Not funded
Polling	International and national personnel				
	Nomination day	20 767			20 767
	Election day	900 638			900 638
	INEC supervisory personnel	100 000			100 000
	Trainees, monitors	533 333			533 333
	Training coordinator	7 200			7 200
	Training assistants	10 800			10 800
Training	Election officers training	250 000			250 000
Materials/rentals	Materials rentals	85 000			85 000
	Vehicle rentals	233 333			233 333
	Election day materials	851 067		c/	851 067
	Food/materials for brigades	109 667			109 667
	United Nations Secretariat equipment	69 220			69 220
	Helicopter lease	1 000 000			1 000 000
	Subtotal	4 171 025			4 171 025
Transportation	Purchases				
	Field vehicles (6)	240 000			240 000
	Light vehicles (14)	560 000			560 000
	Trucks (5)	266 667			266 667
	Minibuses (5)	400 000			400 000
	Motor bicycles/bicycles	150 000			150 000

Category	Description	Amount	Funded	Promised	Not funded
	Operation/maintenance	500 000			500 000
	Air transport fuel/operations	300 000			300 000
	Subtotal	2 416 667			2 416 667
	Grand total	10 750 219	1 125 005	263 000	9 362 214
Summary					
Coordination		332 000	247 000		85 000
Voter education		1 933 855	573 000		1 360 855
Voter registration		1 896 672	305 005	263 000	1 328 667
Polling		4 171 025			4 171 025
Transportation		2 416 667			2 416 667
	Grand total	10 750 219	1 125 005	263 000	9 362 214

a/ United Nations Development Programme.

b/ Commonwealth.

c/ European Union.

d/ Greece.

e/ United States of America.

f/ United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

g/ Canada.

h/ Sierra Leone.

i/ Sweden.

Annex III

Resource mobilization for the Sierra Leone emergency

Agency	Requirements	Pledges	Shortfall	Percentage of needs covered
United Nations Children's Fund	2 799 000	1 100 000	1 699 000	39.3
World Health Organization	1 325 000	759 856	565 144	57.3
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	4 648 800	336 538	4 312 262	7.2
Department of Humanitarian Affairs	237 500	8 772	228 728	3.7
World Food Programme (non-food)	450 000	0	450 000	0
(food and ITSH) a/				
Vegetable oil	3 503 640	1 455 000	2 048 640	41.5
Corn-soya blend	686 280	592 800	93 480	86.4
ITSH a/	493 038	278 460	214 578	56.5
Subtotal	4 682 958	2 326 260	2 356 698	49.7
Total for consolidated appeal	14 143 258	4 531 426	9 611 832	32.0
United Nations Development Programme b/		4 104 000		
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations b/		356 000		
United Nations Population Fund b/		100 000		
Grand total	14 143 258	9 091 426	9 611 832	

a/ Internal transport, stores and handling.

b/ Not included in the March-December consolidated appeal.